DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 204 291 SP 018 225

AUTHOR Pendergrass, R. A.
TITLE Strengthening Existing Teaching Styles: A Staff Development Model.
PUB DATE Feb 81
NOTE 14p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators (Dallas, TX, February 13-18, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Behavior Patterns; Classroom Techniques; *Inservice Teacher Education; Learning Processes; Student Teacher Relationship; Teacher Behavior; Teacher Characteristics; *Teacher Evaluation; *Teacher Improvement; Teacher Role; *Teaching Models; *Teaching Styles

ABSTRACT

Many staff development efforts are based on correcting teachers' deficiencies or weaknesses. In this staff improvement model, individual teaching styles and patterns of behavior were identified, so that they could be used in a more professional way. In determining teaching styles, it is pointed out that there is a quantitative aspect and that many styles will overlap. Five teaching styles are described: (1) task oriented, with emphasis on students completing specific tasks; (2) student and teacher cooperation, with the teacher regarded as a flexible leader; (3) child centered, in which the teacher focuses on student interests and needs; (4) subject centered, with the focus on a specific body of knowledge to be learned; and (5) learning centered, where developing self directed, independent learners is a major concern of the teacher. Following identification of individual teaching styles, the developer tries to meet the teachers at their level, and the content of the inservice improvement program is modified to meet specific needs. The delivery of content is done in such a way as to take advantage of each teacher's existing teaching styles and strengths. (JD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
R.A. Pendergrass
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED204291

STRENGTHENING EXISTING TEACHING STYLES: A STAFF DEVELOPMENT MODEL

by

R. A. Pendergrass

Introduction

Every teacher has an overall approach toward her/his classroom. This overall approach is what will be referred to in this paper as a teaching style. It is possible to identify, or describe, various teaching styles by noting patterns of behavior. These patterns will be remarkably persistent over time, and through changes in the environment. Fischer and Fischer say that "people can be identified with distinctive qualities of behavior that are consistent through time and carry over from situation to situation".[1] It is these distinctive qualities of behavior (teaching style) that concerns the staff developer, and forms the basis for the staff development model presented here.

Background Material

Using the previously stated definition of teaching style, three classification schemes were identified that seemed to be helpful in the study of teachers' sytles. There

SP018225

was a great deal of compatibility among the schemes, see Figure One, even though each set of authors approaches teaching styles from a diffenent angle.

Figure One -- Three Teacher Classification Schemes

Teaching Styles[2]	Professional Stances[3]	Roles[4]
Child Centered	Child Focuser	Person Seeker
Cooperative Planner	Pragmatists	Group Leader
Task Oriented	Task Focuser	Inquiry Trainer
Learning Centered	Contented Conformists	Instructional Manager
Subject Centered	Timeservers	
Emotionally Exciting	Ambivalients	
Emotionally Subdued	Alienateds	

For example, the Fischer's "do not consider all styles of teaching and learning to be equally valid."[5] This allowed then to be selective and they used the following statement as a guideline in compiling their list of styles. "Since the very idea of style is based on a commitment to individualization of instruction and the development of learner autonomy, styles that encourage undue conformity and dependence are not acceptable to us."[6] Regardless, an examination of the styles in their list, the left-hand column in Figure One, reveals some that are learner/child focused and some that are not.

The second classification scheme, the center column in

in Figure One, was concerned with the teachers approach to the classroom plus several other factors related to the school setting. This second scheme has the disadvantage of being used only for the study of sixty elementary teachers. Ths classification scheme might be different if the authors had studied teachers K-12. Still, the idea that each teacher develops an identifiable professional stance is very helpful in studying teachers style. The authors also contend that "professional training and work experience function mainly to allow the participants to elaborate upon personal and attitudinal tendencies already present."[7] This contention, if it is so, would give further validity to the notion of the persistence of teaching styles.

This persistence is not as clearly evident in the Joyce and Morine classification scheme, right-hand column in Figure One. They emphasize that roles can be integrated, that they can overlap, and that teachers even take on different roles as their educational objectives change. However, they do make reference to the separateness of the roles.

> "They are roles that have tradition and history of their own. They have grown from four distinct perceptions of the school's function in society. They provide four different answeres to the humanistic questions of how to encourage the re-creation of the society, how to help students relate to each other, and how to help each individual to grow in unique ways. The goals of the roles overlap, but each role

> tries to enter the life of learners in order to change their responses to living in the world."[8]

Data from these classification schemes, from other sources, and from personal perceptions of how teachers interact in the classroom were used to delineate five teaching styles. It is proposed that these five styles are inclusive of the overwhelming majority of teachers, K-graduate shcool. One note of caution, there is a quanitative aspect that must be taken into account when determining teaching styles. Many teachers have some characteristics of various teaching styles; therefore, the teacher's style is determined by those characteristics which occur most frequently.

Five Teaching Styles

The five teaching styles were labeled as the task oriented style, cooperative manner style, child centered style, subject centered style, and learning centered style. The major characteristics of each of the five styles will be outlined below. (It is beyond the scope of this paper to give detailed descriptions of each teaching style.) Although each style will be presented separately, the reader will no doubt see some overlaps among the syles.

1. Task Oriented. This style is distinguished by it's

emphasis on having students complete specific tasks (performance behaviors). The teacher usually has a carefully sequenced set of learner objectives, an explicit evaluation system an array of materials, and lots of assignments. Assignments and selection of materials reflect a desire to have students moving quickly and efficiently to mastery level; however, diagnostic data is often used for purposes of individualizing learner tasks.

Descriptive terms -- diagnostic prescriptive teachings, systems approach, performance-based learning.

2. Cooperative Manner Style. The distinctive feature to this style is student-teacher cooperation. The content to be covered, the learning activities, and even the method of evaluation may be planned jointly. Group learning is encouraged, and both group and individual interests guide the teacher's decisions. Lesson plans tend to be flexible, with the teacher being a resource, a guide, or an 'experienced' learner. Discipline problems and/or content.

Descriptive terms -- democratic approach, teacher as a group leader, group oriented learning.

3. Child Centered Style. Student interests and needs are the focus of this style. The teaching role is one "single-minded devotion to the pupil as an unfinished personality whose

special needs a teacher must understand and serve."[9] These teachers tend to deveolp the curriculum during the year as they capitalize on student growth, experience, and interest; thus, a set of predetermined behavioral objectives would be an abomination. Learning activities are individualized, and this style assumes that students can/will pursue healthful and educationally sound classroom activities. Self-evaluation in both academics and personal behavior is encouraged.

Descriptive terms -- teacher as facilitator, nondirective approach, personalized learning.

4. Subject Centered Style. Covering a body of knowledge (subject or discipline) is at the core of this style. The teacher is the authority on the content with the responsibility for organizing and delivering it to the students. Students are to learn how to think about, and organize, this body of knowledge. Evaluation is usually based on objective-type tests and/or assignments.

Descriptive terms -- academic approach, teacher centered classroom, direct/formal approach.

5. Learning Centered Style. This style is distinguished by it's attempt to maintain a balance between meeting student's needs/interests and covering a given set of objectives. Some of the course goals and objectives are common to all students.

Other objectives are individualized to the abilities and interests of given students. Learning activities also shift back and forth from independent to small group to whole class as the teacher tries to maintain equal concern for students and content. This styles also stresses a concern for developing self directed, independent learners.

Descriptive terms -- eclectic approach, individualized learning, process approach.

Identifying Styles

A survey form consisting of 30 questions/statements was developed and coded to these five teaching styles. This survey was given to several groups of experienced teachers. A few statements were troublesome and needed slight modifications. An additional question was added giving a 31 item form. This modified form was then administered to additional groups of teachers. Over 300 teachers have responded to the survey thus far.

Since this was a nonvalidated survey form, there was an attempt to get a sort of 'reality check' from the teachers. Generally they responded that the survey was fairly realistic, and that it did portray their actual teaching behaviors. A future step is to emperically validate the survey form;

however, there is enough data generated by the present form to suggest several ways to improve staff development, or inservice education.

A Staff Development Model

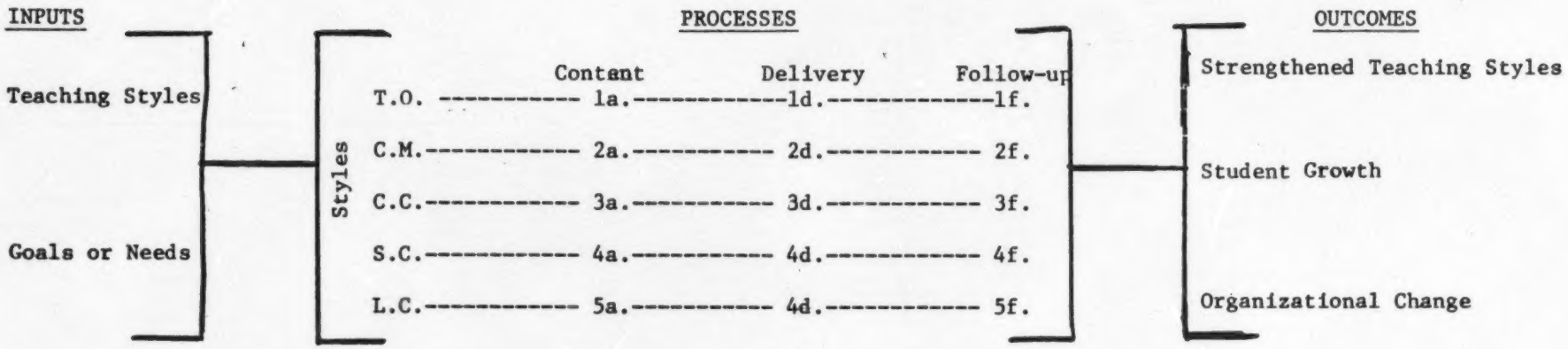
Many staff development efforts are based on the deficiency approach. The teacher's deficiences, or weaknesses, are calculated in some manner, and then the staff development efforts try to remediate these deficiencies. What is suggested here is a strength building model, i.e., find out what the teacher already does (teaching styles) and help them to do those things in a more professional way. Using a system approach the model presented here would have an eight step design, see Figure Two.

[Insert Figure Two]

Step 1. Identify Teaching Styles. Probably the ideal way to identify teaching style is via a combination of student reports, teacher self-reports, and supervisor reports. The ideal way is beyond the realms of feasibility at times; however, the teaching style survey can be given and tabulated in matter minutes making it a very practical tool. Establishing teaching styles is one of the 'inputs'.

Step 2. Staff Development Needs or Goals. The second

Figure Two -- A Staff Development Model For Strengehening Exisiting Teaching Styles



'input' is the purpose of the development effort, e.g., new curricula, improving student scores, working or school climate, etc. These goals or needs should be stated explicitly and publicly to all persons that will be effected. With these two inputs clearly in mind the 'processes' are implemented.

Steps 3,4,5. Content, Delivery, and Follow-up. Note in Figure Two that for each teaching style the content, delivery, and follow-up will be different. The overall goal of the staff development effort is still valid for the teachers regardless of their teaching styles. What is not valid is to assume that the teachers all start from the same place relative to any change effort. Nor is it o.k. to assume that they should all use the same route to get to the desired outcomes. In this model the staff developer tries to modify the content so as to start with the teachers at their level. The delivery of the content is done in such a way as to take advantage of the teacher's existing teaching style. Follow-up activities then revolve around helping the teachers assimilate the change into their normal classroom patterns.

Step 6. Strengthened Teaching Style. In this model the most obvious outcome measure is what happened to the teacher's style. Have they been able to incorporate the goal or need into their classroom? Can they do better than

what they were already trying to do?

Step 7. Student Growth. Although the discussion here has revolved around teaching styles it would be remiss not to mention students. The final goal of a strengthened teaching style is that will help students to grow - academicaliy, socially, and personally. In step seven there is an evaluation of any expected student growth.

Stpe 8. Organizational Change. Step eight does to the organization what step seven does to the student and step six to the teacher. How has the system, particularily at the building level, changed? How are these changes facilitating, or hindering, the teachers? The how's of evaluation, steps 6,7, and 8 are another whole ballgame, but it was necessary to mention them here so that you could get a feel for this staff development model.

Summary

Much of what was said here was not new to those who have worked with inservice programs. What was now was a way to measure teaching style. Also new to many will be the idea of a staff development model based on strengthening existing teaching style. It is an idea which has come of age; hopefully, the presentation will contribute to it's maturation.

Footnotes

[1]Barbara Bree Fischer and Louis Fischer, "Styles in Teaching and Learning", Educational Leadership, Vol. 36, No. 4, Jan. 79, p. 245.

[2]Ibid., p. 251.

[3]Ann G. Olmstead, Frank H. Blackington III, and W. Robert Houston, "Stances Teachers Take: A Basis for Selective Admission," Kappan, Vol. LV, No. 5, Jan. 74, p. 330.

[4]Bruce R. Joyce and Greta A. Morine, Creating the School, Little Brown and Company, 1976, Chapter 10.

[5]Fischer and Fischer, p. 246.

[6]Ibid., p. 246.

[7]Olmstead, et. al. p. 330.

[8]Joyce and Morine, p. 289.

[9]Olmstead, et. al. p. 331.